



Home-stay Information for Leaders

Top Ten Home-Stay FAQs

Home-stays are one cornerstone of People to People Ambassador Programs. Home-stays fulfill the People to People Ambassador Programs' mission to bridge cultural and political borders through education and exchange, making the world a better place for future generations. The idea of a home-stay can make parents and students nervous so please use the following top ten frequently asked questions for help when answering questions from families.

Q: What is a home-stay?

A: Home-stays are at the heart of People to People Ambassador Programs. They allow students to get to know local people while living as members of their family, rather than from a tourist's perspective. On most of our junior and senior high school programs, students stay with local families and experience the way they live, work and play. The home-stay will last one to four nights. The student may be alone or paired with another Student Ambassador, depending on the location and availability of families. Students will spend most of their stay with the family, immersing themselves in the culture. Delegation leaders stay in the same village or city district with host families and are available to Student Ambassadors during the delegation's stay in the area.

TAKE NOTE: We do not guarantee that students will be paired during home-stay visits. Many of our host families have room to host only one delegate. Please do not guarantee that students will be staying at a home-stay with other students from their delegation.

Q: What is a guest house stay?

A: The European guest house experience is unique; typically an entire delegation joins other students of approximately the same age from one or more countries. The days are filled with opportunities to make international friends, talk about their cultures, and enjoy adventure activities together. The Irish guest houses host two to four students at a time. These large houses are similar to bed and breakfasts, and the families who own them always give a warm welcome.

Q: How are the home stay families selected, and what are the requirements for the selection process?

A: Overseas home stay coordinators, many of whom are headmasters of local schools, select host families from their local areas based on a set of guidelines. The host families are generally members of a club, school, or community who know one another. The areas are selected based on size, location and the number of families willing to have a student stay with them. The home stay coordinator and the families sign Success Contracts agreeing to abide by the People to People Ambassador Programs' standards for host families. The main requirement for host families is to provide a safe, clean, welcoming environment. We do not discriminate against families due to financial means, religion or ethnicity. We search out families who are diverse in culture and economic background. We **do not require our host families to speak English**, as part of the cultural exchange is learning to overcome the language barrier.



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Q: Are background checks performed on host families?

A: Background checks are not a normal practice overseas, and in fact, are illegal in most countries. To ensure a safe and welcoming environment for our Student Ambassadors, we enlist the assistance of local home-stay coordinators who work closely with the potential host families, communicating our standards, evaluating the home environment and members of a potential host family.

Q: Are host families paid to host the students or leaders?

A: The only monetary compensation received by the families is a minimal amount for food and incidental expenses. The amount is not as such that a family would find it an incentive to host a student/leader. Many families, in fact, prefer us to make a donation to the local school or club that is sponsoring our students in the area.

Q: Can leaders choose not to participate in a home-stay?

A: If assigned to a home-stay, leaders may not opt to stay in a hotel instead. Home-stay is an equally valuable and unique experience for both delegates and leaders. Leaders are required to participate with delegates during home-stay group activities, including school visits and other events, as well as assist with medical emergencies. NOTE: Leaders are not “off duty” during the home-stay portion of the program.

Q: What activities will host families engage students in?

A: The home-stay experience is one of the most unique experiences offered by our program and has been a highlight for many students and leaders. Host families provide students and leaders the experience of everyday life in their culture. It is not their obligation to entertain the students or leaders, but to allow them to feel comfortable at home and participate in the day-to-day normal activities of the family. The expectation for the home-stay is to immerse students and leaders in the culture and to witness the way the family lives, works and plays.

Q: Can delegates/leaders request to be placed in a non-smoking home stay? How does the program office work around allergies when placing delegates or leaders?

A: We can request, but cannot guarantee a non-smoking home. Allergies and other medical needs are required to be filled out completely prior to departure on a student's and leader's health form. Program office works with the home-stay coordinators so they have the necessary information on file when making home stay placements.

Q: Can my delegates get in touch with our host-stay families prior to travel?

A: Due to last minute circumstances, organization of the host family list, or personal emergency of the host family, it is not always possible to know beforehand which family you or your delegates may be matched with. Please do not promise that students will receive such communication prior to departure.



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Q: How do you ensure safety during a home-stay?

A: The safety of our students and leaders is a high priority, and we have several precautions and procedures in place to ensure the well-being of our delegates. Each Student Ambassador is provided with a telephone number for their leader and an international 24-hour toll free number for the program office. They are also given a code word to use if they feel uncomfortable during their home stay and do not feel free to speak openly.

If we determine that a host family does not meet our expectations, they are immediately removed from participating in future People to People Ambassador programs. We **always** put the safety of our students and leaders first and we will not hesitate to take corrective measures when necessary to ensure our students and leaders are provided with a safe, educational, and enjoyable home stay experience.